March 21st, 2017 Athletics meeting

The purpose of the meeting is to understand funding and support of the UMKC Athletics Department. Over the past several years, it has been noted that this is not sustainable in an era when the academic mission of UMKC is under severe financial stress from cuts to our general revenue allocation and the trend of declining enrollment. UMKC athletics currently relies on a subsidy of approximately $12M a year, most of which comes directly from the core budget of the University. Therefore, we have asked Chancellor Morton and the UMKC Athletics Department how they intend to reduce the University subsidy for athletics. The Chancellor has spoken in Faculty Senate before about the need to lower this subsidy, as has the Director of Athletics Carla Wilson in a UNews article as recently as last year. *The Faculty Senate needs to understand how the Chancellor intends to quickly make UMKC athletics sustainable, while meeting the core mission of the University*.

Questions

1. Many universities have significantly decreased their athletics subsidy in response to financial pressure. What reductions in the Athletics subsidy can we expect to see *immediately*, and then over a longer term, in order to address core academic issues such as:
    a. No money from the core budget is invested in research.
    b. Salaries have been noted as dangerously low in accreditation reports even as benefits have been reduced, and we're struggling to remain competitive for faculty recruitment.
    c. There is a backlog of $300M in deferred/delayed maintenance.
    d. Funding for the Libraries has continued to decline.
    e. Graduate student stipends and benefits are not competitive.
2. Estimates from NCAA figures suggest a move to Div II or Div III would reduce our subsidy by $5-10M. Why, absent compelling evidence that Div I athletics is contributing substantially to the UMKC core mission, does the Chancellor wish to retain Div I athletics?
3. Our student body has a high percentage of Pell grant recipients, high unmet financial need, and high student debt at graduation. How does the University justify student fees for athletics while trying to remain competitive for student recruitment, and lower the financial burden for our most vulnerable students?
4. We have been told that investing in athletics will increase student recruitment, and yet our enrollment numbers continue to sink. What metrics are we using to verify that we would not be more successful recruiting with a Div II or Div III Athletics program?
5. What research or surveys have determined that the support of donors, civic leaders, and community members is linked to UMKC having Div I athletics?
6. Student athletes have lengthy absences from class and often need rescheduled exams, in part because of our participation in the WAC; this works in opposition to our students' academic achievement. How will this be addressed?
7. The report in KCUR about the CBI tourney suggest that we will make money only as a result of future payments from the Gazelle group, but our UMKC athletics spokesperson said the game was "a money maker." In what way was this a "money maker"; where did the initial money for the tourney come from; and how was it decided that this was a good expenditure when we face a $5.8M cut to our budget we must absorb this academic year?
8. What data or studies support the idea that adding baseball and/or an arena would make the UMKC Athletics program profitable—and how long would that take, if ever?